

## **Statement to Winchester City Council Cabinet meeting, 19 August 2024. Stuart Jones**

Good morning Councillors and Chair, Thank you.

I am a member of the Hampshire Bus Enhanced Partnership forum. My statement today has support from several councils in the Bishops Waltham, Swanmore, Durley and Upham area.

Councillors, I understand the Local Plan timing issues. However, I believe that public transport provision in the district is not, and will not be sufficient to support the planned development, without breaking key Plan targets on climate and mobility. The July Transport Assessment is a flawed evidence base and will not stand examination.

I will outline the 3 key issues. I'd then like to propose 3 key steps for you to consider, to improve the plan.

- 1. There has been a massive loss of local public transport services** in our district. In 2017, there were 53 weekday departures from Bishops Waltham Square. In 2024, there are 35 departures and 5 are likely to be lost soon. So in the Winchester Southern Parishes, we have lost direct links to Southampton, Eastleigh and are likely to lose the last link to Botley Station for train connections. Contrary to the Transport Assessment assertions.
- 2. The Transport Assessment refers to the Hampshire Bus Service Improvement Plan** (BSIP). However, out of about 200 bus services in Hampshire, the BSIP is to focus effort and funding on only 44 routes across Hampshire. Meanwhile ridership nationally is up to above 75% of pre-covid levels. The Assessment and Plan does nothing to address the loss of services, with consequences for car use and Local Plan targets. Councillors, this July Transport Assessment shows an X9 service - stopped 2 years ago!
- 3. Market Towns need to be attractive centres to visit** and also easy for people to get to Winchester. But there is a major imbalance here. Alresford has a 25 minute service into Winchester. For Bishop's Waltham and Swanmore, the 69 takes 65 minutes. This is not a fair and balanced situation. Both Market Towns have roughly the same population and are expected to absorb the same development.

And now briefly my 3 proposals:

1. **Improve the Transport Planning** For example, a proper demand survey and analysis based on development, population and transport patterns in each area, for example the agreed Southampton Travel To Work Area. Also there is an opportunity to be a bit creative – for example, regard consider the Market Towns as extended park and ride, or just park at home and ride only zones into Winchester.
2. **Support better local consultations with parishes** and the Hampshire bus team so that the Hampshire BSIP really does meet the needs of the area. Each bus route plan needs active consultation and involvement on local needs. It can't be left to a review once each plan is drafted and delivered by the Hampshire bus team, it needs to be ongoing and challenging.
3. **Finally, on the issue of transport services to the southeast of Winchester District** - please actively support the conversations ongoing with Stagecoach and Hampshire. The frequency and timings of the 69 service need to be improved, which is key for sustainable development in this part of the District.

I hope you will consider these issues and practical suggestions to make the plan sufficiently robust. Thank you